

critical digest

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T. M. KRAUS

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New York Theatre Calendar

Burgess Meredith and Scott McKay replace John Forsythe and David Wayne for 10 weeks in Teahouse of August Moon starting 9/20/54... A Midsummer Night's Dream-Met. Opera 9/21/54. S Hurok presents Old Vic production with music by Mendelssohn. Directed by Michael Benthall. With Moira Shearer, Robert Helpmann, Stanley Holloway... Home Is The Hero-Booth 9/22/53. Theatre Guild presents new play by Walter Macken, starring Irish actor-author. Worthington Miner directed cast with Mr Macken, Peggy Ann Garner and Glenda Farrell... All Summer Long- Coronet 9/23/54. Playwrights Co. presents Robert Anderson's new play adapted from Donald Wetzel's novel "A Wreath and a curse". Alan Schneider directed cast with June Walker, John Kerr, Ed Begley.

Out of Town Tryouts

All Summer Long appears to have the makings of a Broadway success, rates Levy, Variety, on Washington, D.C. debut of Robert Anderson play. After several lines of the two brothers get strengthened to make them less corny, the play should be ready. All acting was highly praised.

Subway Circuit

Dial M For Murder remains one of the best thrillers of recent season, approves Sheaffer, Eagle. Charles Harrow "subway circuit" production with Donald Woods was viewed at Brooklyn Parkway and is currently playing at Queens' Jamaica. Woods contributes a facile, workmanlike performance. The neat, quiet little thriller stands up surprisingly well in the roomy Brooklyn playhouse. My Three Angels with Victor Jory is the current bill.

Wilder's New Play

The Matchmaker, Thornton Wilder's play which opened tour at Edinburgh Festival prior to London try, was recommended by Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, as a heavenly blend of star and role. The star is Ruth Gordon who is supported in cast by Sam Levene. Tyroche Guthrie directed the farce, a rewrite of Wilder's The Merchant of Yonkers. Darlington, NY Times English reviewer, also okayed star, but feared the play feel to pieces at the end, leaving the actors drowning in a flow of words.

Closed Circuit TV 3 Shows

Actors Equity and Box Office Television, Inc have worked out an agreement for the closed circuit telecasting of 3 Broadway shows this season. 100 theatres outside of NYC will receive the special telecasts. 7 Year Itch will be one of shows covered. Each actor will receive a minimum of \$342.50 for the special telecast. Talks with other theatre unions are now in progress.

Digests of Current Plays Resume Next Week

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 ' Off Broadway '
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Barber of Seville, Virginia Card's English adaption, will give 6 invitation performances at Malin Preview Theatre Sept 17-19, 24-26...Amato Theatre's production of the same work will be given Sept 17-19 at Amato Theatre, 159 Bleecker. A special children's matinee will be given Sept 18 at 2 30 PM.

Will Kuluva and Robinson Stone will portray leading roles in Broadway Chapel Players production of Noah...Jacqueline Brookes will play lead in Players Theatre production of Clandestine Marriage opening Oct 2 at Provincetown, and will not join uptown production of Cretan Woman. ...Terry Becker will direct A Stone for Danny Fisher opening at Downtown National Oct 21...Jacob Ben-Ami will co-star with Morris Carnovsky in World of Sholem Aleichem returning Sept 30 to Barbizon Plaza.

Equity Library Theatre opens its 11 season Oct 20 with Noel Coward's Fallen Angels at Lenox Hill Playhouse, 531 E 70. ...Congreve's Way of the World will open at Cherry Lane Sept 29...Showcase Theatre opens season at Finch College Theatre Oct 11 with Mr and Mrs North

The Flies, which continues at Cherry Lane through Sept 18, was praised by Shanley, Times, as a creditable presentation of a work that has some interesting ideas within it. It has a competent cast, well directed by Denis Vaughan.

The Cretan Woman production of Players Theatre at Provincetown is less successful than Washington, D.C. Arena Stage production of Jeffers script in approximating a classical style, complained Atkinson, Times. It compensates for its lack of classical resourcefulness by yelling and excessive miming, he panned.

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 ' West Coast '
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That's Life revue will continue into December at Las Palmas, L.A...Dark of the Moon opened as first production of 20th Fox Studio Club season.

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 ' Theatre Film Notes '
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Oh Men Oh Women has been sold to Charles Feldman, but he will not film it for over a year...The new English-Italian film version of Romeo and Juliet won top prize at Venice's 15th International Film Festival.

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 ' Vaudeville '
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Maxine Sullivan stars at new Palace stage show, with Wally Dean and Buddy Clayton featured. "Southwest Passage" is the film.

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 ' Yiddish Theatre '
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You're Deep in My Heart musical in Yiddish opens season at Elsmere, Bronx. Israel Rosenberg and Vera Rosanko present new musical Oct 7.

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 ' Theatre Book Comments '
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"Collected Plays by Terence Rattigan (British Book Centre) with preface by the author constitute an interesting record and commentary on the craft of writing for the theatre by a man who has been conspicuously successful, recommends Atkinson, Times.

"103 Lyrics of Cole Porter" (Random House) helps the reader understand the writer's intent and to appreciate his craftsmanship, points out Zinsser, Herald Tribune.

REVIEWER "PRO" STAGE...If only for its potential value as a free medium of expression, the American stage would deserve to be cherished, states Watts, Post. Unlike TV, radio and films, the theatre remains free to speak its mind; when it has one. The greatest possible sign of the stage's basic attraction, critic believes, is that so many people still go to the theatre despite high prices, uncomfortable playhouses and cavalier treatment at the box office.

COLUMN TIPS...Shuberts may bar Boston Post critic Norton from Fanny, hears Winchell...Fire Island will have a summer theatre next season, reports Walker.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Morehouse, World Telegram & Sun, personal poll of first nighters discovered that not one in 50 desires to return to the 8 40 time...Watts, Post, feels he was unjust to the critic who wants to return to 8 40 openings (Chapman, News.) Post reviewer chides News man's unselfish concern for the comforts of that neglected and under privileged class, the carriage trade first nighters.

MORE DOG PLAYS...If the really worthwhile plays are as few and far between as in past seasons, Nathan, Journal American, would like to see many more plays with dogs in casts. He can name a dozen plays that have profited critically from nothing more than a dog taking its stand firmly at the footlights after it was supposed to have made an exit.

TALENT ADVICE...Hope Holiday, Arabian Nights, and Barbara Cook, Carousel, will have their names up in lights soon, predicts Coleman, Mirror...Maurice Evans will have no trouble raising money for his next show, now that Teahouse of August Moon has paid its investors a profit of 90% already, bets Morehouse, WT&S...Chapman, News, is sure he has the biggest casting scoop of the year in fact that John Ringling North has acquired for Ringling Bros. circus an elephant bigger than Jumbo who stood 10 feet 9 inches high. Producer needs name for find.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...All Summer Long author Robert Anderson told Hawkins, WT&S, that he likes to underwrite and see the actors give something to the script.... Most of the artists in Hayride cannot read music and most refuse to learn dialogue, producers Jack Stone and Barron Howard admitted to Coleman, Mirror.

GENERAL PURPOSE ACTORS...The actor and actresses who can make an audience cry and/or laugh have brought increased gratification to the dramatist, pleasure to the playgoer and prestige to the theatre, points out "Stage." editorial. British trade paper names Eli Wallach, Peter Ustinov and Alec Guinness as such general purpose actors who have recently "rocked the house" in comedy roles.

Pros & Cons by TMK

Several NY critics are having a friendly space filling feud over the virtues and vices of the 8 PM opening night curtain. A basic fault in the defense of both sides is the assumption that most theatre goers like to eat at the same time. A glance at the side-walk in front of any NY legit theatre between 8 and 8 40 PM will reveal that theatre fans arrive at the playhouses at different times. Some eat early and arrive at the theatre at

8 PM and some eat later and arrive at the theatre at 8 45 PM. London's managers have sought a reasonable solution to this problem by having their shows open at a variety of times. NY's recent early Monday curtain test was never given a fair chance. Perhaps this season several long range tests of various-curtain times will be tried.

Two problems concerning actors vs. producer Actors Equity. The first concerns the charges brought by summer theatre producer Lewis Harmon against John Barrymore, Jr. Producer claims actor used abusive language against his wife in public. Second case involves Cheryl Crawford's complaint against Betsy von Furstenberg. Actress who was featured in Oh Men, Oh Women was absent from cast unnecessarily, producer claims. Joan Gray has replaced her in cast. Decisions in both cases will set precedents in actor-producer relations.

Plays

King of Hearts moves to National Oct 4...By Beautiful Sea will move to another theatre in Nov...Kismet gave \$2375 to Damon Runyon Fund...President Theatre bought by School for American Ballet...House of Flowers will open at Alvin the week of Dec 19...Wish You Were Here will be featured as part of "Ice Capades of 55" which opened at Madison Square Garden this week.

People

Lawrence Perry, drama columnist for North American Newspaper Alliance and the Bell Syndicate, died at age 78 of lung cancer...Larry Gates will withdraw from Teahouse of August Moon to take a role in Sing Me No Lullaby, and will also take a 2/3 cut in salary...Brian Aherne and Edna Best will share billing with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in Quadrille...Norris Houghton, Raymond Massey, Mildred Dunnock, Donald Oenslager and Bill Penn are attending the organization meeting of the National Council of Churches' Commission on Drama in NYC.

Other Broadways

Baltimore's Hilltop Theatre-Parkway operated by Don Swann, Jr. will open a 27 week stock season Oct 12...Houston Playhouse will resume with a revised board of directors but with Joanna Albus remaining as head.

Theatre Record Notes

RCA Victor is recording the entire Old Vic production of Midsummer Night's Dream and will release album Sept 21.

Theatre TV Notes

CBS Best of Broadway production of The Royal Family Sept 15 features Helen Hayes, Claudette Colbert, Frederic March and Charles Coburn...NBC TV production of Lady in the Dark Sept 25 features Ann Sothern, James Daly, Sheppard Strudwick, and Louella Gear...NBC TV Operations Entertainment Sept 20 will be a one hour tribute to performers who have entertained troops overseas.

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